

Sectional Current Affairs India and States

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to be the Chief Guest at Republic Day Celebrations 2019

- ***South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be Chief Guest at India's 70th Republic Day celebrations on January 26, 2019.***
- Ramaphosa was invited to be chief guest by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when two leaders met on sidelines of G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

India and Sweden sign MoUs in Renewable Energy sector

- **India and Sweden** In December, 2018 signed **two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) in the Renewable Energy sector** to enhance the technology and bring in energy efficiency in India.
- The first MoU was signed between Swedish solar pump manufacturer **Spowdi** and Bangalore based **EMVEE** for **setting up local manufacturing/assembly in Bangalore.**
- The second MoU was signed between **Swedish Earth Fault Protection System** provider **Swedish Neutral** and India's leading distribution company **Tata Power DDL** for **setting up a pilot for earth fault protection in Delhi.**

India's First Engine-Less Train Touches 180 Kmph Mark During Trial Run

- **India's first locomotive-less aka engineless train breached the 180 kmph mark during the test run In December, 2018,** a senior official said. It has been **named 'Train18'.**
- This Rs 100-crore indigenously designed train will become the country's fastest train.

UP-Nepal to sign MoU declaring Ayodhya-Janakpur twin cities

- The **Uttar Pradesh** and **Nepal** governments will soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) **to declare Ayodhya and Janakpur as twin cities,** an official said In December, 2018.
- An understanding to this effect was arrived at a meeting between a Nepalese delegation and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath late In December, 2018.

Microsoft India to host first Education Days in India on Dec 4-5

- Continuing in its efforts to enhance the educational landscape through technology, **Microsoft India is organising the first Microsoft Education Days 2018 in Gurugram on December 4 and 5.**
- The two-day event will bring together students, over 220 educators and Microsoft Partners under one roof to showcase their work and deliberate on innovation in Education in India.

FSSAI launches Heart Attack Rewind Campaign for elimination of industrially produced trans-fat

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched media campaign **"Heart Attack Rewind",** calling for **elimination of industrially produced trans-fat in the food supply.**
- It will support FSSAI's global target of eliminating trans-fat in India by 2022, a year ahead of global target by World Health Organization (WHO).
- It is in line with FSSAI objective to get Freedom from 'Trans Fat: India@75'.

Government launches Digital Sky Platform for drone registration

- The Union Government's Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) to enable safe flying **of Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS) popularly referred to as drones** came into effect on December 1, 2018. The Government had announced the release of the regulations in August 2018.
- With the announcement, while nano drones can start flying in the country with immediate effect, for drones of micro size and above categories, the operators would be required to register on the **Digital Sky portal**.

Nagaland becomes first north-eastern state to launch single emergency number '112'

- The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on December 1, 2018 launched **the single emergency number '112' under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) for the state of Nagaland**.
- The launch coincided with the state's formation day and the **inaugural day of the 2018 edition of the Hornbill Festival**.

India, US agree to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation

- **India** and the **US** have **agreed to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation that follows the discussions and outcomes of the 2 plus 2 Dialogue** held in New Delhi this year.
- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who is on a visit to the US, discussed with American counterpart James N Mattis the growing partnership between India and US in the field of defence.

Second meeting of NITI Forum for North East held in Guwahati

- **The second meeting of the NITI Forum for North East was held in Guwahati on December 4, 2018.** The meeting was presided over by Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog Rajiv Kumar and co-chaired by Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region, Dr. Jitendra Singh.
- The NITI Forum for North East was constituted in 2018 to periodically review the development status in North Eastern Region.

International conference on bears starts in Agra

- **The four-day International conference on bears began in Agra, Uttar Pradesh** on December 4, 2018. The conference is expected to witness participation from over 80 delegates from 11 countries across the world.
- The conference is aimed at sharing knowledge on the principles of the welfare of bears and other wild animals in zoos, sanctuaries and rescue centres.

Statue of Unity among top tourist destinations

- The 182-metre tall '**Statue of Unity**', dedicated to Sardar Patel in Gujarat's Narmada district has slowly become one of India's top tourist spots.
- The statue is now attracting around **30,000 visitors every day**. The United States Consul-General Edgard Kagan also visited the memorial.

India, China exchange views on issues of common interest

- **India** and **China** In December, 2018 exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest.
- Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Vice Foreign Minister of China Kong Xuanyou held consultations in New Delhi.

Mahindra's Igatpuri plant India's first Carbon Neutral Facility

- Mahindra's Igatpuri plant has become **India's first carbon neutral manufacturing facility** and has been certified by Bureau Veritas (India) Pvt. Ltd.
- Mahindra & Mahindra said that it was the first company in the world to commit to doubling its energy productivity by 2030, signing on to The Climate Group's EP100 program.

National Commission for Women to support livelihood programmes for women in northeast

- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** has decided to support northeast livelihood programmes for women, particularly for those falling under the younger age group, through skill development and specialised training.
- The livelihood programmes will impart skill training to these women in order to make them self-reliant.

Railways Ministry, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum sign MoU to foster tourism in Delhi NCR

- The **National Rail Museum (NRM)** of the Railways Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Madame Tussauds Wax Museum to foster tourism in Delhi NCR region**.
- **This first time ever public-private museum collaboration** will help attract more tourists to both National Rail Museum and Madame Tussauds Wax Museum.

GSAT-11: India's heaviest communication satellite launched successfully from French Guiana

- India's heaviest and most-advanced communication satellite **GSAT-11**, also called the "**Big Bird**", was successfully launched into space on December 5, 2018 from **the Spaceport in French Guiana, South America**.
- The satellite will help provide satellite-based internet to remote places where cable-based internet cannot reach. The satellite, **weighing 5854 kg**, is the heaviest Indian-made equipment that has been put into the orbit.

India, Peru sign agreement for co-operation and mutual assistance in Customs Matters

- **India** and the Republic of **Peru** on December 5, 2018 signed an agreement for **co-operation and mutual assistance in customs matters**.
- The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the **80th Session of the Policy Commission meeting of the World Customs Organisations (WCO)** which was held in **Mumbai** during December 3-5, 2018.

WCD Ministry to formulate guidelines to ensure safety of children in hostels

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development will soon **formulate guidelines for children's hostels, prescribing the minimum standards of care that should be provided to the children**.
- The decision comes at a time when institutions, housing children on the request of parents who are unable to take care of them and their education or due to other circumstances that force parents to keep them at children's homes, are not registering under **the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurates India Water Impact Summit 2018 in New Delhi

- Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, **Nitin Gadkari** inaugurated **India Water Impact Summit 2018 in New Delhi**.

- The three days summit is jointly organised by the Ministry, National Mission for Clean Ganga and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies.

Bihar government sets Rs 100 fee for family property split

- **Bihar government fixed Rs 100 as the charge** for people to get their property registered after division of family's immovable assets.
- This decision was taken at cabinet meeting which was chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Conference on partnership between EU and India for Cultural Heritage Conservation begins

- The two-day conference on partnership between the **European Union and India commenced in New Delhi for Cultural Heritage Conservation.**
- Over 30 leading experts are deliberating on issues being faced in cultural heritage conservation and exploring innovative solutions to tackle challenges of climate change and urbanisation.

Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana: Delhi Government launches Free Pilgrimage Scheme for senior citizens

- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on December 5, 2018 launched the '**Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana**' which offers **free travel packages for senior citizens from Delhi to five religious circuits.** 1,100 senior citizens from every constituency of Delhi will be able to avail this facility at one go.
- Under this free pilgrimage scheme, **a Delhi resident above 60 years will be eligible to take free pilgrimage along with his or her spouse.**

Cabinet approves implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam (National Project) on river Ravi in Punjab

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi In December, 2018 **approved implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam Project, Punjab on river Ravi,** Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said.
- For this, **Central Assistance of Rs 485.38 crore (for irrigation component) would be provided over five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23.**

Centre approves additional assistance of over Rs. 3048 cr to Kerala in view of recent devastating flood

- Centre In December, 2018 approved an **additional assistance of over 3048 crore rupees to Kerala in view of recent devastating flood in the state.**
- It also sanctioned over 539 crore rupees to cyclone hit Andhra Pradesh and over 131 crore rupees to landslides affected state of Nagaland.

Foundation stone of PUSA 'Kisan Haat' in ICAR's ATIC was laid by Radha Mohan Singh

- Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Radha Mohan Singh In December, 2018 **laid the foundation stone of Pusa Kisan Haat in ICAR's Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC).**
- The Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister said with a view to encourage and attract youth towards agricultural education and cater to the rising number of students, an international hostel is being constructed.

Cabinet approves National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems

- Union Cabinet In December, 2018 approved the **National Mission on interdisciplinary Cyber-physical system** which will be implemented by Department of Science and Technology at a **total outlay of Rs 3660 crore for a period of five years.**

- Under this scheme, 15 Technology Innovation Hubs, six Application Innovation Hubs and four Technology translation Research Hubs are to be set up across country.

Indian Coast Guard conducts Exercise 'Clean Sea-2018' at sea off Port Blair

- The **Indian Coast Guard** has conducted the **Regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise titled 'Clean Sea - 2018' at sea off Port Blair** In December, 2018.
- Coast Guard ships Viswasth, Vijith, Rajveer, Rajshri, 4 interceptor boats and its air assets Dornier and Chetak helicopters participated in the exercise.

Ravi Shankar Prasad launches National Challenge 'Ideate for India - creative solutions using technology' for school students

- Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad In December, 2018 launched **National Challenge - 'Ideate for India - creative solutions using technology' for school students in New Delhi.**
- '**Ideate For India**' national challenge is a joint collaboration between National e-governance Division and Intel India, supported by the Department of School Education and Literacy of Ministry of Human Resources Development.

Kiren Rijiju inaugurates All India Police Shooting Competition 2018 at Manesar

- Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju In December, 2018 **inaugurated the 19th All India Police (AIPDM) Shooting Competition-2018 at Manesar, Gurugram in Haryana.**
- More than 750 participants of 31 teams of State Police Forces and Central Armed Police Forces are participating in the event.

India pays homage to Dr B R Ambedkar on his 63rd Maharparinirvan Diwas

- India paid homage to Bharat Ratna **Dr BR Ambedkar on his 63rd Mahaparinirvan Diwas on December 6, 2018.**
- He died on **December 6, 1956** and the day is observed as Mahaparinirvan Diwas every year.

Modi to inaugurate Asia's 2nd largest bridge Bogibeel in Assam on Vajpayee's birthday

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate on December 25 **the Bogibeel Bridge, India's longest rail-road bridge, connecting the north and south banks of the Brahmaputra**, falling in the eastern part of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, a senior railway official said as per PTI.
- The ceremony to mark the opening of the bridge coincides with **the 94th birth anniversary of the former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, who passed away in August.
- It will be the second largest bridge in Asia with three-lane roads on top and a double-line railway track below.**

India's first underwater museum to open off Puducherry coast soon

- India is set to get its first underwater museum off the Puducherry coast**, giving a boost to tourism in the Union territory.
- INS Cuddalore**, a minesweeper decommissioned in March after it travelled 30,000 nautical miles in 30 years, will be turned into a museum, according to a Times of India report.

Kia Motors signs MoU with Andhra for future eco mobility

- South Korean auto major **Kia Motors** In December, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) **with the state of Andhra Pradesh to collaborate on the partnership for future eco mobility.**

- The partnership reinforces Kia's commitment to support the Andhra Pradesh government in growing the uptake of electric vehicles (EV) and the development of a local EV infrastructure, the company said in a statement.

Gangotri, Yamunotri in Uttarakhand; Amarkantak in MP; and Parasnath in Jharkhand included under PRASAD Scheme

- Union Government included **Gangotri** and **Yamunotri** in Uttarakhand, **Amarkantak** in Madhya Pradesh and **Parasnath** in Jharkhand under **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)** to develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country.
- With the new additions, the number of sites under PRASAD has now reached to 41 in 25 states.
- It was launched in 2014-15 by Union Ministry of Tourism.

Air pollution causes 1 in 8 deaths in India

- India, with 18 percent of the world's population, has a disproportionately 26 percent of the global premature deaths and disease burden due to air pollution.
- One in eight deaths in India was attributed to air pollution in India in 2017, making it a leading risk factor for death.

Tourism Ministry formulates Guidelines for approval of Online Travel Aggregators

- The Union Ministry of Tourism has formulated the guidelines for approval and re-approval of **Online Travel Aggregators to ensure adequate safeguards against deficiency of service, alternate arrangements and punitive deterrence.**
- The voluntary scheme will be open to bonafide online travel aggregators to bring them on a common platform in the organised sector. The guidelines will be rolled out online by the end of December 2018. Hence, all applications and fee payment will have to be made on the online platform.

Kandhamal Haldi of Odisha to get GI tag

- **Odisha's Kandhamal Haldi (turmeric)** will soon get Geographical Indications (GI) tag.
- Its registration was moved by Kandhamal Apex Spices Association for Marketing and was accepted under sub-section (1) of Section 13 of Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

India opposes move to declare Gilgit-Baltistan as fifth province

- India has voiced strong opposition to **Pakistan's move to declare Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth province.**
- MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said India's stated position on Gilgit Baltistan has been very clear and consistent.

NITI Aayog launches Global Hackathon on Artificial Intelligence

- **NITI Aayog** in partnership with **Perlin**, a Singapore-based AI start up, has launched '**AI 4 All Global Hackathon**' to further expand the idea of '**Artificial Intelligence, AI for All**' articulated in the National AI Strategy.
- **The Hackathon was announced at the AI conference organised by NITI Aayog, in partnership with the ORF, held in Mumbai in November 2018.**

India Water Summit concludes in Delhi

- The three days India Water Summit concluded in New Delhi In December, 2018. Key issues including afforestation, biodiversity, urban river management, innovation in sewage and sewerage management were discussed during the event.
- During the valedictory session, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, U.P Singh emphasized on the creation of a working group which will help in converting technology to working models.

Foreign Minister of Iceland meets Sushma Swaraj in Delhi

- **Foreign Minister of Iceland Gudlaugur Thór Thórdarson In December, 2018 met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in New Delhi** and held discussions on bilateral, multilateral and international issues of interest.
- The two sides noted that in the **areas such as geo-thermal energy, fisheries, IT, pharmaceuticals and tourism, the two countries could establish strong partnership**. The Icelandic Minister appreciated growing opportunities for Icelandic companies in the fast-growing Indian economy.

MP Upendra Kushwaha resigns from Union Council of ministers

- Member of Parliament and Chief of Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP) **Upendra Kushwaha resigned from the Union council of ministers on December 9, 2018.**
- According to reports, Kushwaha has sent his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he is quitting the BJP-led NDA alliance.

India starts visa on arrival for South Korean nationals

- **India has started granting visa on arrival to South Korean nationals**, a move that makes South Korea the second nation to be given the privilege after Japan, whose citizens have been getting the privilege since March 2016. The decision came into effect from October 1, 2018.
- Like the Japanese nationals, the facility to South Korean citizens would include double entry visit for a period not exceeding 60 days for business, tourism, conference and medical purposes for entry through six designated international airports - Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

India successfully test-fires Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile Agni-5

- The indigenously built **Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile Agni-5 has been test-fired successfully from Abdul Kalam island under Chandipur Interim Test Range** In December, 2018.
- This is the fourth successful test of this missile. Previously the test of Agni 4 was unsuccessful. Having 17 meters length and 2 meters diameter the missile can hit the target from a distance of 5 thousand kilometres.

Government notifies four commonly used medical devices as drugs

- The Union Government has notified four commonly used medical devices including **nebulisers, blood pressure monitors, digital thermometers and glucometers as drugs under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.**
- The decision will enable the government to ensure their quality and performance. The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) will regulate the import, manufacture and sale of these devices from January 2020.

Tamil Nadu launches toll-free helpline '181' for domestic violence victims

- The Tamil Nadu government on December 9, 2018 **launched a 24-hour toll-free helpline '181' for women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment**. The initiative was launched by the state's Chief Minister K Palaniswami.
- The move will enable women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment at home or workplaces to contact the toll-free helpline to get emergency assistance such as police help, legal aid or medical services including an ambulance.

India, China to resume military drills after one year gap

- The 7th India and China joint military exercise - '**Hand in Hand**' will begin on December 1, 2018 in the southwest Chinese city of Chengdu. It is scheduled to conclude on December 23.
- The exercises will be held after a gap of one year as both the sides were locked in a 73-day standoff in Doklam in the Sikkim sector of the border in 2017.

Kannur International Airport in Kerala begins operations

- **The Kannur international Airport-KIAL in Kerala began its operations on December 9, 2018** with Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu and Kerala Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan jointly lighting the lamp inside the terminal building, marking its inauguration.
- The chief minister and the Union Minister then jointly flagged off the first flight from the airport to Abu Dhabi at 10.10 am.

18th All India annual conference of heads of science centres, museums begins

- The 18th **All India Annual Conference of the Heads of Science Centre's and Museums began on December 8, 2018 in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Inaugurating the three-day conference, Arunachal Pradesh Environment and Forest Minister Nabam Rebia said that the Arunachal Pradesh State Council Science and Technology is playing an important role to tie up and collaborate with other scientific institutions across the country to promote science and technology in the state.

Home Ministry launches Twitter account to spread awareness about cybercrimes

- Home Ministry launched a Twitter account '**@CyberDost**' to spread awareness about cybercrimes and normal precautions to be taken.
- The Twitter handle **@CyberDost** is aimed at enhancing people's basic knowledge about cybercrimes and precautions to be taken for prevention.

PM Modi to inaugurate Partners' Forum 2018

- **The Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the fourth Partners' Forum on December 12, 2018 at New Delhi.**
- The Government of India, in association with the **Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)**, is hosting this two-day international conference.
- The invited countries have been selected from across all regions and income levels and include countries that are **currently chairing key global and regional bodies (e.g. G7, G20, BRICS, etc.)**.

EU Ambassador opens India's first CoE at MAHE

- India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence established by the European Union was inaugurated at the Department of European Studies (DES) at Manipal Academy of Higher Education here In December, 2018 by Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to India and Bhutan, Tomasz Kozlowski.
- Kozlowski congratulated the leadership, faculty and students of MAHE on this achievement and stated that Manipal has always been a pioneer in promoting higher education and research in international relations in India in general and European studies in particular.

Delhi HC bans online sale of medicines across India

- The Delhi High Court on December 12, 2018 ordered a **ban on the sale of online medicines by e-pharmacists across the country**. The court directed both Central and state government to ensure immediate implementation of the order.
- The HC bench comprising **Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice V K Rao passed the judgement while hearing a PIL filed by Delhi-based dermatologist Zaheer Ahmed** who complained that lakhs of medicines were being sold on the internet every day without much regulation, posing a huge risk to patients and doctors alike.

UP to establish Umbrella University named after former PM late Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- The Uttar Pradesh Government has decided to establish **an umbrella university to control all the medical and dental colleges and nursing institutions in the state**. The university will be named after former Prime Minister, **late Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
- The decision was taken in a cabinet meeting headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at Lucknow on December 11.

Govt approves auction of 683 private FM Radio channels

- The government has approved the auction of **683 private FM Radio channels in 236 cities, some of them in remote areas**.
- Answering a specific question, he said an **FM Relay station at Godda in Jharkhand has been approved**. The Minister said , a transmitter is being procured for this purpose.

SC Collegium recommends Justice Ravindra Bhat as Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court

- The Supreme Court collegium recommended the appointment of **Justice Ravindra Bhat as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court**.
- **Justice Bhat is currently a judge of the Delhi High Court**.

First National Workshop on Explosives Detection inaugurated at Pune

- The first National Workshop on Explosives Detection was inaugurated In December, 2018 at High Energy Materials Research Laboratory Pune.
- A total of 200 delegates from different **DRDO labs, Army, CRPF, CISF, Police, Academic Institutes, Industry and other Security agencies** are attending the workshop.

India, Saudi Arabia sign bilateral annual Haj 2019 agreement

- **India and Saudi Arabia** on December 13, 2018 signed **the bilateral annual Haj 2019 agreement at Jeddah**. The agreement was signed by the Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Haj and Umrah Minister of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benten.

- A large number of Muslim women are likely to go to Haj 2019 without “**Mehram**” (male companion). More than 2100 women have already applied.

India's first private UAV factory comes up in Hyderabad

- **India's first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) opened at Adani Aerospace Park** here In December, 2018.
- Built by the **Adani Group** and Israel-based **Elbit Systems**, the 50,000 square feet facility will develop Hermes 900 medium altitude long-endurance UAVs for the Indian and global markets.

Google launches shopping website in India

- Google has unveiled **Google Shopping**, a dedicated search engine intended to provide an immersive and improved online shopping experience.
- Along with finding products, **Google Shopping allows users to filter through offers and review prices across multiple retailers.**

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal dedicates first Railway University to nation in Vadodara

- **Railway Minister Piyush Goyal dedicated India's first Railway University to the nation in Vadodara** yesterday. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Goyal said that this is a big step towards the professional education and training in the railway sector.
- **Ministry of Railways has sanctioned 421 crores rupees for this university** and its curriculum development for the next five years.

Telangana becomes India's first state to have paperless justice system

- **Telangana became the first state in the country to have Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) integrated with the Crime and Criminals Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS)** project that facilitates transparency and speed in police service delivery.
- The ICJS is aimed at integrating the CCTNS project with e-courts, e-prisons, databases, forensics, prosecution, juvenile homes and a nationwide fingerprint database of criminals.

ICMR releases draft of India's first essential diagnostics list

- In a bid to ensure quality diagnostics at all level of healthcare facilities, **the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has formulated draft of new National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL).**
- “The list is on the lines of the drug list. It is a scientifically designed list, **which has been based on the World Health Organization's list of essential diagnostics** for key areas like HIV and hepatitis, but it also takes into account the priority areas of non-communicable diseases and diseases prone to outbreaks such as dengue,” Dr Kamini Walia, senior scientist at ICMR was quoted by Hindustan Times as saying.

ECO Niwas Samhita 2018-an Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings launched

- Ministry of Power has launched the ECO Niwas Samhita 2018, an **Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings (ECBC-R).**
- **The implementation of this Code is will give a fillip to energy efficiency in residential sector.**
- **This Code has been prepared after extensive consultations with all stakeholders, consisting of architects & experts including building material suppliers and developers.**

J-K admin greenlights proposal for setting up first-ever university in Ladakh

- **Jammu and Kashmir administration** In December, 2018 gave its nod for the **establishment of the first ever university in Ladakh.**
- The approval came during a State Administrative Council meeting chaired by Governor Satya Pal Malik. His advisors, K Vijay Kumar, Khurshid Ahmad Ganai and Kewal Kumar Sharma, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam and Principal Secretary to the Governor Umang Narula were also present at the meeting.

JK becomes first state to have explicit law banning 'Sextortion'

- **J&K has become first state in the country to have a law explicitly banning sexual exploitation of women by those in positions of authority,** having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant.
- Bill seeks to amend the Ranbir Penal Code whereby specific offence under section 354 E is being inserted to provide for the offence of '**Sextortion**'.

President Kovind lays foundation stone of Railway Station at Kevadia

- President Ramnath Kovind In December, 2018 laid the **foundation stone of new ultra-modern Railway Station at Kevadia in Narmada district of Gujarat**
- **The station will connect the Statue of Unity project to the rest of India** through broad gauge railway line.
- **As per schedule 32 kilometers long new broad-gauge railway line between Chandod and Kevadia** will be completed in one year and connect the Kevadia with the rest of country.

PM Modi held delegation-level talks with Maldivian President; signs 4 MoUs

- **India and Maldives signed four agreements** on various fields in New Delhi.
- Both sides agreed to further strengthen bilateral ties. **They welcomed new visa agreement between India and Maldives.**

IAF flies India's first bio-jet fuel blended Aircraft

- A team from the **Aircraft Systems and Testing Establishment (ASTE),** Indian Air Force's (IAF) premier testing establishment, **flew India's first military flight using blended bio-jet fuel on Russian-made An-32 transport aircraft here In December, 2018.**
- The aircraft was flown by experimental test pilots and test engineers from ASTE. The project is a combined effort of IAF, **Defence Research, and Development Organisation (DRDO), Directorate General Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA)** and **CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum.**

Severe Cyclonic Storm 'PHETHAI' over west central Bay of Bengal weakens into a cyclonic storm

- The Severe Cyclonic Storm '**PHETHAI**' over west central Bay of Bengal moved further northwards with a speed of 24 kmph, weakened into a cyclonic storm and lay centred over west central Bay of Bengal.
- Cyclone '**PHETHAI**' is also being tracked by DWR Chennai, Machilipatnam and Vishakhapatnam apart from Satellite and other observations.

IIT Bhubaneswar's solution wins first IoT innovation challenge

- **An Internet of Things (IoT)-based solution from IIT Bhubaneswar that can store, track and analyse data related to consumers' LPG consumption** has won the first edition of '**The Grand India IoT Innovation Challenge**' by Tata Communications.

- The winner **Prajjawala** from IIT Bhubaneswar received Rs 5 lakh as top prize in the 4-month long contest organised in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Tamil Nadu Launches Door-Step Aadhaar Enrollment For Children Below 5

- The Tamil Nadu government has launched a scheme to provide the **door-step registration for Aadhaar for children under the age of five**. The scheme, worth Rs. 13.61 crore, will help collect the biometric data of children from their homes to issue them their unique Aadhaar number, an official statement said.
- Chief Minister K Palaniswami launched the scheme In December, 2018 and gave away seven Aadhaar kits that contained laptop computers and biometric machines Social Welfare Department officials for the scheme.

Railways to introduce first AC local train in north India in 2019

- The **first AC local train in north India will hit the tracks next year**, with the railways planning to launch the state-of-the-art train for passengers travelling short distances **from Delhi**.
- The **MEMU** (mainline electric multiple unit) train, having eight stainless-steel coaches, will cater to the **Uttar Pradesh cities within 200-300 km from Delhi**.

ISRO successfully launches GSAT-7A satellite

- The Indian space research Organisation ISRO In December, 2018 successfully **launched geostationary communication satellite GSAT-7A onboard Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F11**.
- The exclusive advanced communication satellite separated from the rocket after 19 minutes of the launch.

Govt to open Eklavya School in areas having significant tribal population

- Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram has said that every block with **more than 50 per cent Schedule Tribe, ST population and at least 20 thousand tribal persons**, will have an **Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022**.
- The Minister said, as per census 2011, **there are 564 sub-districts having more than 50 per cent ST population and at least 20 thousand tribal persons**.

India's International Aviation Safety Assessment rated highest

- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) **has retained the highest aviation safety ranking for India**.
- The US regulator, FAA carried out an audit in July 2018 to confirm **India's adherence to the standards laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)**.

Transport Ministry asks states to accept vehicle documents, driving licence in electronic format

- The Union Road Transport and Highways Ministry on December 18, 2018 asked **states to facilitate acceptance of driving licence and other documents such as vehicle registration certificates in electronic format by enforcement agencies**.
- The Ministry, while issuing a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to states**, said that the vehicle owners can also show their documents including driving licence, RCs and insurance certificates through mobile apps like **Digilocker and mParivahan app**.

Maruti Suzuki India, Ministry of Rural Development sign MoU for training rural youth under DDU-GKY

- The Union Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) on December 19, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd for training rural youth for skill development under the flagship Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY).
- The Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) is the flagship placement linked skill-training scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development.

India's largest cancer institute 'National Cancer Institute' launched

- India's largest cancer hospital, National Cancer Institute (NCI) began the trial run of its Outpatient Department on December 18, 2018.
- Located in Jhajjar District, NCI is a project under AIIMS, Delhi.

Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla released

- The Department of Posts recently released the commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla, who was associated with Champaran Satyagraha of 1917.
- Rajkumar Shukla made a seminal contribution in drawing the attention of Mahatma Gandhi to the plight of peasants suffering under an oppressive system established by European indigo planters in Champaran (Bihar).

NFAI and FTII sign MoU for transfer of land for construction of film storage facility

- National Film Archive of India (NFAI) and Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for transfer of three acres of land for the construction of storage facility for films and film material.
- The land belonging to FTII at their Kothrud campus in Pune will be transferred to NFAI for this purpose.

Government launches Asiatic Lion Conservation Project to conserve their population

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on December 20, 2018 launched the "Asiatic Lion Conservation Project" to protect and conserve the population of Asiatic Lion and its associated ecosystem.

The total budget of the project for 3 years amounts to around Rs 9784 lakh.

PM Modi to release commemorative coin on Paika Rebellion; will inaugurate Lalitgiri Archaeological Museum

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the commemorative coin and postage stamp in memory of Paika Rebellion on December 24, 2018 during his visit to Bhubaneswar to commemorate Paika Rebellion.
- The Prime Minister will also be inaugurating the Lalitgiri Archaeological Museum, adding a new facet of tourism in the region and increase the immense potential of employment generation.

Assam govt approves release of Chah Bahgicha Dhan Puraskar Mela

- The Assam government has approved the release of second instalment of the Chah Bahgicha (tea estate) Dhan Puraskar Mela.
- All the beneficiaries will get 2,500 rs in their bank accounts by January 15, 2018. The government will bear Rs 200 crore towards this.

India, China hold first people-to-people exchanges meeting

- External Affairs Minister Sushma and her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi co-chaired **the first-ever meeting of India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges** in New Delhi on December 21, 2018.
- India and China had decided **to set up people to people mechanism during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping** on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit in China.

'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' field-level awareness campaign launched in three states

- A three-state field-level campaign on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) will be organised by the Union Government from the first week of January 2019.
- As a part of the campaign, **over 900 cultural programmes across various districts of Maharashtra, 100 programmes in Goa and 30 programmes in UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli would be held.**

Government authorises 10 central agencies to monitor any computer

- The Union Government has authorised ten central intelligence, security and tax agencies to **intercept, monitor and decrypt all the data** contained in "any" computer system. The order was issued on December 20, 2018 by the 'cyber and information security' division of the Ministry of Home Affairs(MHA) under the authority of Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba.
- The move has set off a political storm with the opposition accusing the government of trying to create a "surveillance state".

Defence Minister inaugurates Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on December 22, 2018 launched the **Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** at Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) in Gurugram.
- The inaugural event saw participation from officials belonging to different ministries and ambassadors and resident defence attaches of partner countries.

India successfully test-fires Agni-IV ICBM from Odisha coast

- India In December, 2018 **successfully test-fired its nuclear-capable long-range Inter Continental Ballistic Missile Agni-IV, with a strike range of 4,000 km.** The test was part of a user trial by the Army.
- The strategic surface-to-surface missile was flight tested from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Dr Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast at 8.30 am.

India's first music museum to be set up in Thiruvaiyaru, Tamil Nadu

- The country's first music museum will be set up with assistance from the Central government in **Thiruvaiyaru, Tamilnadu**, the birth place of **Saint Tyagaraja**, one of the Trinities of Carnatic music.
- This was announced by the State Minister for Culture and Tamil Development Shri K Pandiarajan in Madurai In December, 2018.

President of India Inaugurates Centre of Excellence for Genetic Blood Disorders

- President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the **Centre of Excellence for Sickle Cell Anaemia, Thalassemia and Other Genetic Blood Disorders** at the **Prathima Institute of Medical Sciences** in **Karimnagar, Telangana** In December, 2018 (December 22, 2018).

- Speaking on the occasion, the President said that our country has made significant strides in the field of healthcare.

PM releases commemorative Rs 100 coin in honour of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative **Rs 100 coin in honour of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee** in Parliament house.

NGT bans mining activities within 10 km radius of Sariska Tiger Reserve

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on December 22, 2018, **banned all mining activities within 10 km radius of the Sariska Tiger Reserve.**
- It also said that any further mining activity is subject to the clearance of leases by the **National Board of Wildlife.**

NGT sets up Expert Panel to look into re-use of RO waste water

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** constituted an expert committee to devise ways of re-filtration or secondary use of Reverse Osmosis (RO) waste water.
- It will look into ways of making re-filtration or the secondary use of the rejected waste water from RO systems viable.

PM announces Sardar Patel Award for National Integration

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced annual **Sardar Patel Award for National Integration at the DGPs/IGPs Conference at Kevadia.**
- This award would be given for outstanding efforts to further national integration.

PM Modi inaugurates Bogibeel Bridge in Assam; flags off first passenger train

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 25, 2018 inaugurated **India's longest rail-road bridge 'Bogibeel Bridge' over the Brahmaputra River in Assam** to boost defence along the border with China.
- This 4.94 kilometre long bridge over the Brahmaputra river took nearly two decades and **over Rs 5900 crore to get completed.**

Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana launched in Uttarakhand

- **The Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana has been launched in Uttarakhand.** Under the scheme, each household in the state will be able to avail medical **treatment of up to 5 lakh rupees annually.**
- **The scheme will benefit 23 lakh households and cover 1,350 critical diseases.** Launching the Yojna in Dehradun, Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat distributed scheme-related golden cards to beneficiaries.

UP Police bans namaz in public places

- **The Uttar Pradesh Police has reportedly issued an order banning namaz at a public park in Noida's Sector-58.** According the reports, police banned the prayers or any religious activities in the park following a complaint.
- The companies in the area had earlier sought district magistrate's permission for their employees to offer Friday prayers at the open grounds, but had to come back empty handed.

Patna Zoo closed after deaths of peacocks due to H5N1 Virus

- Patna Zoo has been closed for an indefinite period following the confirmation of H5N1 virus killing six peacocks in the zoo.
- The zoo had been closed following deaths of six peacocks between December 16 and 24. The bodies of the peacocks were sent to **National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal** where it was confirmed that birds died after being infected with H5N1 virus.

Maharashtra CM launches Vajpayee International Schools in Mumbai

- Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on December 25, 2018 launched **Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Schools in Mumbai**, on the occasion of the 94th birth anniversary of the late Prime Minister.
- The State aims to introduce international curriculum in 100 schools run by civic bodies, the tribal development department, the social justice department and the education department.

PM Modi to rename three islands in Andaman and Nicobar after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will rename three islands of **Andaman and Nicobar** after **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose** on **December 30, 2018**. These three islands are - Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island.

Renaming of islands

| Island | New Name |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Ross Island | Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island |
| Neil Island | Shaheed Dweep |
| Havelock Island | Swaraj Dweep |

- These islands will be renamed during PM Modi's visit to Port Blair to **mark the 75th Anniversary of hoisting of the National Flag at Port Blair by freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose**.

Triple Talaq Bill passed in Lok Sabha

- The Lok Sabha In December, 2018 passed the **Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill**, also known as **Triple Talaq Bil**, by negating the amendments moved by some opposition members, making all declarations of instant triple talaq void and illegal.
- It seeks to make the practice a **punishable offence with imprisonment of up to three years**.
- The Bill will replace the **Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance-2018**.

Andhra Pradesh gets new High Court

- **Andhra Pradesh** got its own High Court on **December 26, 2018**. It will start functioning from January 1.
- Ministry of Law and Justice notified the constitution of the **High Court in Amaravati**.
- **Andhra Pradesh High Court** will be the **25th High Court in the country**.

NITI Aayog releases Second Delta Ranking under Aspirational District Programme; Virudhunagar District ranked as most improved district

- NITI Aayog on December 27, 2018 released the Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP). The rankings were released by **NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant**.
- **Virudhunagar District of Tamil Nadu was ranked as the most improved district in the Rankings**. The ranking represented the incremental progress made by districts between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018.
- The districts were ranked in a transparent basis on parameters across **Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure** through key performance indicators.
- **Pakur in Jharkhand was ranked worst at 111.**

Gaganyaan Programme: Cabinet approves Indian Human Spaceflight Initiative; first manned flight to take place in 40 months

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on December 28, 2018 approved the **Gaganyaan Programme, first Indian Human Spaceflight Initiative of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- The **Gaganyaan Programme will require a total expenditure of around Rs 10,000 crore**. This expense includes cost of technology development, flight hardware realisation and essential infrastructure elements.

Cabinet approves amendment in POSCO Act, 2012 to protect children from sexual abuse

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 28, 2018 approved the proposal for **Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children**.
- **The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography** with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.

Cabinet approves setting up of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2018

- **The Cabinet approved the draft National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018.**
- The Bill seeks to replace the existing regulator Central Council for Indian Medicine (CCIM) with a new body to ensure transparency.

Tourism Ministry signs MoU to develop mobile audio guide app for five iconic sites

- The Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism K J Alphons handed over a Memorandum of Understanding to Resbird Technologies under the **'Adopt a Heritage' project for the development of a mobile audio guide application for five iconic sites** at a function in New Delhi on December 27, 2018.

The five iconic sites are as follows:

- Rajasthan - Amer Fort
- Assam - Kaziranga
- Goa - Colva Beach
- Kerala - Kumarakom
- Bihar - Mahabodhi Temple

Besides this, the Tourism Minister also handed over the Letters of Intent to seven shortlisted agencies for consideration under the project in the presence of Tourism Secretary Yogendra Tripathi.

Railways to grant fare concession to transgender senior citizens

- The Indian Railways announced on December 27, 2018 that it has decided to **grant 40-per-cent concession in passenger fares to transgender senior citizens.**
- The concession will be applicable to those of the third gender, who are aged 60 years or above. It will be available from January 1, 2019.

PM Modi renames Ross, Neil & Havelock Islands in Andaman and Nicobar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi In December, 2018 announced the renaming of three islands of Andaman and Nicobar on the occasion of 75th anniversary of Tricolour hoisting by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Port Blair. Mr Modi was addressing a public function at the historic Netaji Stadium in Port Blair this evening.
- The Prime Minister said, the Ross Island has been renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, the Neil Island would now be known as Shaheed Dweep and the Havelock Island as Swaraj Dweep.
- Mr Modi also released a commemorative stamp, its first-day cover and a 75 rupees coin on this special day. He also announced setting up of a deemed university after Netaji Bose.
- This includes 7 Megawatt solar power plant, Solar Village, launching of State Wide Network, Optical Fiber Cable connecting Chennai and Port Blair, plasma regasification plant, upgradation of Ayush and Garacharma hospitals, 50 MW LNG Power Plant, introduction of 20 electric cars, release of book on start-up policy, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Island Industrial Development scheme and Chatham Bambooflat bridge.

PM to inaugurate Indian Science Congress-2019 in Punjab on Jan 3

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate Indian Science Congress-2019 in Jalandhar, Punjab on the third of next month.
- This will be the 106th edition of the event based on the theme 'Future India: Science and Technology'.

PM Modi's visit to Uttar Pradesh: One District, One Product Regional Summit held; 6th International Rice Research Institute inaugurated

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 29, 2018 visited Varanasi and Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh on December 29, 2018.
- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of medical College in Ghazipur during the visit in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He took stock of the preparations for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

6th International Rice Research Institute dedicated to the nation

- The Prime Minister dedicated the 6th International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) to the nation. The Institute is built at the campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi.
- It will serve as a hub for rice research and training in South Asia and SAARC region. *This first international Center in the eastern India is expected to harness and sustain rice production in the region.*

One District, One Product Regional Summit

- The **One District, One Product Regional Summit** was held at **Deendayal Hastakala Sankul (Trade Facilitation Centre & Crafts Museum)** in **Varanasi**.
- '**One District One Product**' scheme is aimed at enhancing the skills of local people and increasing the reach of the indigenous trades, crafts and products from small towns and small districts in the state.

Hooda panel recommends creation of specialised information warfare units, restructuring of military intelligence

- The panel headed by former Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General (retired) **DS Hooda** has recommended that the **Army and the Air Force** should sort out their issues such as the **ownership of attack helicopter and utilisation of air defence assets** which are common for both the services in a big way.
- Lt Gen Hooda submitted his report to the **NSAB** recently and held discussions with the members of the **NSAB** including noted **China expert Lt Gen SL Narasimhan** about **10 days ago**.
- The panel was set up by the government based on the **recommendation of Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra about five months ago** and utilise Lt Gen Hooda's expertise for carrying out a study on the restructuring of the armed forces.

Cabinet approves submission of India's Second Biennial Update Report to UNFCCC

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has approved **Submission of India's second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** towards the fulfilment of the reporting obligation under the Convention.
- The second biennial update report aims to provide an update to **India's first biennial report to the United Nation's body on climate change**.

Delhi Police becomes first police force in country to digitise all malkhanas

- The **Delhi Police** In **December, 2018** become the first police force in the country to digitize all **malkhanas, rooms for keeping seized arms and ammunition**, across every police station in the state, an official release said.
- Delhi Police Commissioner **Amulya Patnaik** inaugurated the **e-malkhana project of the remaining 10 districts at Chinamaya Mission**.

President of India Inaugurates the 12th Global Healthcare Summit in Mumbai

- The President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind**, inaugurated the **12th Global Healthcare Summit organized by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in Mumbai** In **December, 2018**.
- Speaking on the occasion, the President acknowledged the professionalism and excellent reputation of doctors of Indian origin in the **US**.

IndiGo becomes first airline to get longer range Airbus A321neo plane

- Budget carrier **IndiGo** has become the first domestic airline to have longer range **Airbus A321neo plane in its fleet with the first aircraft arriving Saturday morning in New Delhi** from the European aviation major **Airbus' Hamburg facility in Germany**, an airline source said.

- The maiden A321neo (new engine option), VT-IUA, landed at 9.06 am at Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi and was accorded the traditional water canon salute on arrival, the source told PTI.

Indian railways to build India's first vertical bridge

- Indian railways will be building country's first vertical-lift bridge connecting Rameswaram in Arabian Sea to mainland India that will allow ships and steamers to pass through without any hinderance. It will replace the existing 104-year-old Pamban bridge.
- The bridge, which is **over two-kilometre-long, is likely to cost Rs. 250 crore.**
- **It will have a 63-metre stretch which will lift up** while remaining parallel to the deck to allow access to the ships.

Delhi govt to erect welcome gates at 12 border points

- The Delhi government has decided **to erect 'Welcome Gate' at 12 border points of the national capital by next year.**
- The welcome gates will be put up at Delhi's main border points - **Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Sonipat, Kharkhoda, Bahadurgarh, Badli, Gurugram, Kundli and Gazipur.**

Tuticorin Airport to soon be 5th International airport in Tamil Nadu

- Efforts are on to develop **Thuthukkudi (Tuticorin) Airport as the fifth international airport in Tamil Nadu.**
- Airport Director **N Balsubramaniam** revealed on December 31, 2018 that the airport is likely to be declared as an international airport within four years.
- International flights are already being operated from four airports of the state including **Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Trichy.**

India submits Sixth National Report to the Convention of Biological Diversity

- India on December 29, 2018 **submitted its Sixth National Report (NR6) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).**
- **The report was submitted online to the CBD Secretariat by Union Environment Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan** during the inaugural session of the 13th National Meeting of the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs), which was organised by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), New Delhi.